

“NEVER, NO NEVER, NO NEVER”
NO. 3150

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have:
for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say,
The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”*
Hebrews 13:5-6

[Other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the whole or parts of these two verses, are as follows:
Sermons #477, Never! Never! Never! Never! Never!
#1449, A Vile Weed and A Fair Flower and #1880, A Lesson and A Fortune for Christian Men of Business]

WHEN the Lord foretold, through the mouth of His servant the prophet Isaiah, that He would “make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow,” surely He must have had in His mind such precious truths as this one which we have in our text, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

This is the very essence of consolation, I might truly say that it is the quintessence of delight. Here is solid spiritual food condensed into a very small space. Take these eight words and extract the marrow from them, or treat them as a honeycomb and get the sweetness out of them into your soul—and it will be full of content, nay, more—it will be overflowing with sacred delight. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

I. With such a text before us, we need no further preface, so we will at once begin our meditation upon the text. And first, I will ask you to VIEW THESE WORDS AS A QUOTATION.

You observe that the apostle writes, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” from which it plainly appears that Paul was quoting from Holy Writ, and this should teach us how needful it is for us also to quote Scripture whenever we can. The Holy Spirit abounds in gracious thoughts and in fitting language in which to express those thoughts, so He has no need to make extracts from what He has previously said. Yet He pleases to do so. Instead of giving us a new promise, He here gives us an old one over again, as if to remind us that there are no better things in the world than the words of God Himself and that the very noblest expressions are those which have been already used.

Besides, the Holy Spirit here puts honor upon the Old Testament by quoting from it for the consolation of New Testament believers. There are some persons who seem to think more of the New Testament than they do of the Old Testament. I have met with Christians in Germany with whom it has been quite a superstition that the evangelists were superior to the apostles, and that the apostles were superior to the prophets. But I trust that such notions as those will never spread among us.

We see here that when an apostle writes as an inspired man, he quotes from the Pentateuch, he quotes from the Chronicles, and he quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah—so that we are to honor the Old Testament, and not to look upon it as a secondary book compared with the New Testament, but to reverence the divine teaching in both portions of the inspired Word.

In addition to that, the Holy Spirit bids Paul apply this Old Testament promise to us, to show us that the words spoken to saints in the ancient times were spoken also to us, so that if the Lord gave a promise to Jacob, it was not meant to be restricted to Jacob, but to belong to all those who, like Jacob, can wrestle in prayer. And that if God spake, as He did, a promise to Joshua, it was not intended to be for

Joshua only, but for all who were in like circumstances to his. Scripture promises have, all of them, a message to all believers—and if you believe in Jesus Christ, what God has said to other believers of old He says this day to you.

I think we may learn much from the fact that this promise is a quotation from the Old Testament. Where did Paul find it? It is not very easy to say, because it occurs in various places and the apostle has not quoted it literally. He has given the sense rather than the exact words of the quotation. He may have quoted the Septuagint version rather than the Hebrew, for no doubt he was familiar with both. There is not any one text in the Old Testament of which you could positively say that it is the one he intended, but there are several passages, any one of which you might say, “The words are almost here, and the spirit and meaning of the passage are entirely here.”

One of the first passages which Paul may be supposed to have quoted is Genesis 28:15. The fugitive Jacob lies asleep, with a stone for his pillow. In his dream, he sees a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. At the top of it stands the Almighty, who makes a covenant with him—and amongst the other covenant promises is this, “Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for *I will not leave thee*, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

Here you get the words, “I will not leave thee.” Does not that passage, in its proper connection, suggest that *the promise is very applicable to young people starting out in life*? Jacob was leaving his father’s house, under very unfavorable circumstances, and he was going to a distant country, where he had relatives, but strangers might have been kinder to him than Laban was, for he got all he could out of him and gave him as little in return as he could. So Jacob, starting for Padanaram, gets this promise from God, “I will not leave thee.”

I can conceive of that promise coming to some young friend here. You have committed yourself to God’s keeping, you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and now you are about to start on a new career. Some measure of trembling comes over you and you have been breathing this prayer to God, “O Lord, lead me in the way in which You would have me go—guide me in all my untrodden way.”

It is just possible that you are going to a distant land and you are a lover of your home, as Jacob was, and you feel some natural anxiety concerning the change that you are about to make. Here comes in the promise that is just suited to your case, “I will not leave thee.” Jacob proved the truth of that promise. Although he had many trials, which were most of them of his own making, yet never was he deserted by his God.

In his old age, he said, “All these things are against me,” but he was not speaking the truth when he said that, for even then everything was working for his good. And notwithstanding his troubles, he died a blessed old man, who was able to give blessings to others as well as to enjoy them himself. So, my dear young friend, take this text as the Lord’s promise to you for many years to come, “I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

There is a second passage which is more nearly to the point, from which the apostle probably did quote. That is Deuteronomy 31:6-8. Moses first speaks to the children of Israel and he says to them, “Be strong and of a good courage: fear not, nor be afraid of them: (that is, of the Canaanites) for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

Then turning to Joshua, Moses says, “The LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; *he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee*: fear not, neither be dismayed.” In Joshua 1:5, we find that the Lord repeated the promise to Joshua, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” In the version which Paul may have read, the words here may have been identical with those he uses in writing to the Hebrews.

What do we learn from the context of this passage? *God was here speaking to those who were about to lose their leader and who would need this assurance.* Moses was about to die. He had been the mainstay of the children of Israel and they had always looked up to him as their leader. Under God, Moses was the father of that nation and he carried them like children in his bosom.

If they wanted water, it was he who smote the rock to make the stream gush forth. If they needed that their enemies should be destroyed, it was he whose uplifted hands brought them the victory. Now Moses was about to go up to the top of Nebo, and to die there—and the people greatly trembled at the prospect of losing him. But the Lord gave them this promise to console them, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

Moses dies, but Moses’ God does not die. The strong man, whose eyes had not waxed dim, and whose natural force had not abated, must look from the mountaintop upon the good land beyond the Jordan—and then his God must take away his soul as with a kiss—yet God would not be gone. He is the dwelling place of His people in all generations.

You see then, dear friend, what is the bearing of the text upon your experience. You have lost, or are about to lose, the mainstay of your house. Your father is failing in health and you cannot shake off from your mind the apprehension that, in a few more days, you may have to pay a visit to the grave. One in whom you have rightly reposed much confidence, and in whose presence you have felt that all was well, is soon to be taken away from you.

But be not distressed as though God Himself were about to die, for JEHOVAH ever lives and He said to you, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” You who are already, or who soon will be a widow, dry your eyes with this blessed handkerchief. You who are, or soon will be, a fatherless child, be of good comfort, for your Father in heaven will not leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Perhaps I am addressing members of a bereaved church. You have lost a man of God, who went in and out among you as Moses did among the children of Israel in the wilderness, and you are asking, “Where is his successor to come from?” Perhaps there is a Joshua within sight, but you are half afraid as to whether he will have the power needed to carry on the great work. Trust that the God who was with Moses will be with Joshua also, and take this promise home to your own heart, and say to each of your fellow members in the sorrowing church that the Lord has said, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

There is another passage from which Paul may have quoted, in the first Book of the Chronicles, in the 28th chapter, at the 20th verse, where David says to his son, Solomon, “Be strong and of good courage, and do it: (that is, build the temple) fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; *he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*, until thou have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.”

I scarcely need indicate that *the promise is applicable to any who are about to undertake some great enterprise for God’s glory*. You have not to build a material temple, but you have perhaps to build up a spiritual church, or to evangelize a wide district, or to gather together a class of young people—and you feel half afraid that you are unequal to the task—but will not this promise be like a girdle about your loins? Will it not strengthen you to do exploits when the Lord says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”? Go in this your might, O you who are full of weakness and trembling. Go, for God bids you go and henceforth let not your heart ever again fear!

One other passage contains part of our text in another form. It is that well-known one in Isaiah 41:10, “Fear thou not; for *I am with thee*: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, *I will help thee*; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” There the promise is enlarged, but the sense of it is the same—it is a promise of the divine presence and of the divine help to the Lord’s tried and afflicted people.

II. Now we will change the run of our thought and VIEW THESE WORDS AS AN ADAGE OR HOUSEHOLD WORD FROM GOD.

I think this must have been a sort of proverb or common saying amongst the early Christians, “The Lord hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” and that it was one of the things that they constantly said the one to the other. I wish that we had more such holy proverbs current among us nowadays—that our common sayings were more worth saying than they often are, and that our proverbial philosophy were more truly Christian philosophy.

This saying, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” is *peculiarly a saying of God*. Paul puts a, “Thus says the Lord” to this saying, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” To my mind, it invests these words with special power to my soul when I remember that it is God who speaks to me and to each of my fellow believers, and says, “*I—I say this, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*” As I repeat these words, they may not seem to you to have much power in them, but if the Holy Spirit will impress these simple syllables upon your heart, they will come to you full of the music of heaven and you will realize that it is GOD who says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Further, *these words are remarkably forcible in the original*. You probably have heard that in the Greek there are no less than five negatives. We cannot well translate them into English except in such language as that of the verse we were singing just no,

*“The soul that on Jesus has lean’d for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”*

In our English language, two negatives would destroy each other, but it is not so in the Greek language—and the heaping up, as it were, of these denials on God’s part of all thought of ever forsaking His people ought to be sufficient to satisfy even the most doubtful among us. If God has said, “I will not, *not*, NOT, no never forsake my people,” we must believe Him, and we must chase away all thought of the possibility of the Lord’s forsaking His servants or leaving them to perish.

These words also derive much of their preciousness as a Christian proverb from the fact that *they relate to God Himself and His people*. They are God’s own words and they speak concerning Himself, “I will not leave thee.” This is not merely a promise of deliverance out of trouble, or of the presence of angels to bear us up in their hands lest we dash our feet against a stone. God is not here promising us any temporal mercies, nor indeed any spiritual mercies by themselves, but He is speaking concerning Himself, who is the substance of all His own promises, but infinitely greater than the promises, and He says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

And you will observe that *this promise ensures to us God’s presence and God’s help*. “I will never leave thee”—that is, “I will always be with you,” “nor forsake thee.” The force of that promise is, “Being with you, I will never let you work alone. I will help you. I will not desert you as to My presence and I will not desert you as to My succor. I will be with you and I will help you in all that you have to do.” This is a double promise and it is doubly sweet.

Besides that, *this promise wards off from us the most terrible calamity that could possibly occur to us*. It may help to make this promise increasingly precious to us if we think for a minute what would become of us if God did leave us or forsake us. Then indeed might the heavens be hung with blackness and the light of the sun be put out forever if God should leave us. The straight road to hell would be open before us and we should soon be going there if we were forsaken of God. It would have been far better to never have been born, or never to have known the way of life at all than, after all, to be deserted of God and be left to perish. Thank God that can never be the portion of anyone who has truly trusted in Him.

Recollect also that, *if He had not been God, He would have forsaken us long ago*. Our patience with our fellow creatures holds out but a very little while. But it is because God is God, and therefore changes not, that we are not consumed. Have you not done a thousand times enough to have made Him forsake you if He were like the sons of men? I confess sorrowfully that I know I have.

And if He could turn from His eternal purpose, and if His everlasting love could change, then surely He would long ago have cast my poor soul far away from His presence, to receive its well-deserved punishment. Is it not a blessed thing to think that the very thing that is most to be feared by any man can never happen to a believer, for God has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”?

You do well deserve to be forsaken of God, but He will never leave thee. He will deal with you in the way of grace, and not of justice. If He left you, you would utterly perish, but He will not and cannot do so—you are too dear to Him for His heart to ever turn away from you.

And while this promise averts from us the direst ill, *it secures to us the richest possible blessing*. To have God with us—is there anything beneath the sky—is there anything above the sky that is a choicer blessing than that? To be with God and to have God with us is the very heaven of heavens. And he who has this blessing here has a veritable heaven upon earth. No other blessings can ever be compared with this one. No mirth of them that make merry in the dance, or of those who shout by reason of wine can ever be likened to the holy excitement and enthusiasm of a soul that is in the presence of God and knows that it is there.

To be helped of God, which is the second part of the promise, is bliss indeed. What better help than that does anyone need? We are glad to be helped by our fellow Christians who have the ability to aid us—but to be helped of God is to have the treasury of heaven and the great deeps of divine omnipotence to draw upon. Whatever it is that we really need, we already have if God is with us, for, “no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” The best of blessings are secured to the man to whom God has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Then, beloved friends, *this is a promise that only God could give*. The husband whispers in the ear of his wife, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” but he forgets the hour of death when he must go from all below. The mother, as she presses her child to her bosom, says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” but she knows not how soon that little child may be an orphan to need another’s care.

Friend says to friend, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” forgetting how changeable human friendships are, for many are the hearts that have been rent asunder by vows, honestly whispered at the time, which have been forgotten through the lapse of years, or have been treacherously broken.

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” is not a promise for mortal lips to utter. Transient beings like ourselves must not venture to say, “I will never do this or that,” for, alas! we know not what we may do, or may not do! Even though we think we shall never prove to be traitors, yet traitors we may prove to be. Or if not traitors, our power may fail so that we shall be unable to do what we have promised.

But when JEHOVAH says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” it is a divine promise and He who utters it, divinely keeps it. ’Tis a fit promise for God to speak and ’tis a fit promise for God’s servants to hear. You have lost many of those dear to you, but you have not lost your God. They have gone from you one by one, “as star by star grows dim,” but His light still shines on—and shall shine on forever.

Further, beloved, *this choice promise provides against all troubles*. We do not know what troubles may come upon us. Let us not think about them. They will come soon enough and it will be quite sufficient for us to trouble ourselves about them when they do come. But whatever they may be, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” There may come to us great losses. Our riches may take to themselves wings and fly away—where we had large estates, we may be without a place whereon to lay our head. But “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

We may be the victims of cruel slanders and under the pressure of those slanders those that used to respect us may avoid us—and former friends may be alienated from us. But “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” We may have to suffer great pain and the earthly physician may be unable to relieve us. But God’s promise will still avail us, for, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Sore sinking of heart may come upon us and all God’s waves and billows may roll over us—but “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

In the course of our service for God, we may meet with many difficulties. Where we looked for helpers, we may find opponents. But let us still press onward, for, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” We may have to move to distant lands, but “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Days of weakness may come to us, when the pillars of the house shall tremble, when they

that look out of the windows shall be darkened, and the grinders shall fail because they are few. The infirmities of old age may tell upon us, but “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

And with old age may come the loss of children and friends, till we seem left, “like the last rose of summer,” or the last sere leaf of the woods in the autumn—yet “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” And then shall come the chill river of death and the gathering darkness of the night—but “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

And after that shall come another world, where our spirit shall fly through tracks unknown, and where new and wondrous scenes shall burst upon our astonished view. And in the fullness of time, Christ shall come and the last great battle shall be fought—but whatever is to be, or is not to be—a Christian has nothing to fear, for, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Come forth, you dragon bound with the chain and ravage the world again if so it must be. Rise, Antichrist, from your den amidst the seven hills, pollute the churches once again if you can. Let war and bloodshed, famine and pestilence break loose again with unknown fury—but whatever happens, in time or in eternity, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

“Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” If the Lord of hosts is with us, what grounds can there be for fear? I know of no supposable dangers, no imaginable troubles, no conceivable difficulties, through which, and out of which, and beyond which this text will not carry us—if by faith we grasp it, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

III. Now I must pass on to the next point. We have viewed these words as a quotation and as a proverbial saying. Now the practical outcome of this subject, according to the text, is that we are to **VIEW THESE WORDS AS A MOTIVE FOR CONTENTMENT.**

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” That is to say, do not be grasping, do not be seeking to rake all the world to yourself, do not stretch out your arms, like seas, to enclose all the shore.

“But” says one, “I have so very little.” You have as much as God has been pleased to give you, so be content with such things as you have. “I wish I had a great deal laid by,” says another. Do you need more than this, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”? “I wish I had a large regular income,” says another. This looks pretty regular, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Someone asks, “But does that mean temporal things? “Do you think that God will let your body die of starvation when He promises to take care of your soul? There is an ancient promise for the man who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” And it shall still be so—in this matter, also, the Lord will not leave you, nor forsake you, if you trust in Him.

It seems to me that the man who can claim this promise has his fortune made for him. If he had made large investments, they might turn out badly. If he possessed large estates, they might have to be sold. If he had wealthy friends, they might all forget him, for memories are not always very strong in the direction in which some people wish they might be.

Many a man has fallen from the pinnacle of personal wealth to the pit of personal want—and many others, who were waiting for dead men’s shoes, have had to go barefoot to their own graves. It is poor confidence that trusts in men, but it is blessed confidence that rests in this glorious truth of God, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” “Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.”

But I know how it is with many of us—we cannot live by faith, we are so apt to think that something to see and to handle is so much more satisfactory than a promise of God. But is not that a species of blasphemy? Is not God’s promise better, more sure, more satisfactory, more ennobling, more divine, than anything that can be seen? O child of God, what more do you need than this gracious assurance, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”?

What though your wallet holds but little, if your God has said that He will fill it every morning and every evening, what more do you want? The children of Israel tried to store the manna, but it bred

worms and stank, for they were to gather their daily supply morning by morning. There is many a man who has not been content to trust in God, so he has asked for something to look at and to handle—and he has had it and it has been a stench in his nostrils all his days, and he has never again been the man he was when he had not given way to an evil spirit of covetousness.

I would rather be the poorest Christian in this world, and live on this promise, than be the richest man that lives and not have this promise. And in saying this I am sure that I am speaking for every Christian here. Our true treasure is this, “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” That is our bank stock in the Bank of Heaven. All else that we have is but the spending money of a traveler when he stays at an inn. But we are soon to be up and away to the land where our true treasure lies, where our God and our Father lives who has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”.

IV. The last point is that THESE WORDS ARE TO BE VIEWED AS A REASON FOR COURAGE.

“So that we may boldly say, The LORD is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

If God says to me, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” I never ought to be the victim of fear of man. Yet the fear of man, that brings a snare, is one of the curses of the lives of many professors. They are afraid of opposition and afraid of persecution—and although persecution is very mild nowadays compared with what it used to be, they are afraid of the public opinion in their little circle, afraid of the contemptuous remarks that will be made, afraid of the cold shoulder, afraid of the innuendoes and the dark hints, afraid to be thought to be one of those “vulgar people” who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who desire to follow Him “whithersoever he goeth.”

That horrible fear of losing the respect of ungodly people still operates upon thousands and tens of thousands who, if they only realized the truth of this promise, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” would each one say, “Let men think what they like of me, let them call me a fool or a fanatic, let them shun me, but what does it matter as long as You, my Lord, do not forsake me?”

So, my brethren and sisters in Christ, let every one of us, first of all, fling away from our souls, by the power of God’s Spirit, all desire to grasp this world and make that our god. Let us abhor covetousness. If God sends us wealth, let us reckon that we are only stewards of it and use it for His glory. If He does not send it to us, let us be quite content to be without it, for it brings a heap of trouble with it. Let us always keep the world under our feet and reckon it to be unworthy of a Christian’s craving.

Then let us fling away all cowardice and boldly say that the Lord is our Helper, so we will not fear what man may do to us. Accursed be the lips of any minister who dares to say, “I must not utter that unpopular truth for fear I should have the censure of the public press or public opinion.” Shall such fear as that ever stop us from uttering what we believe to be true? If it does, how shall we be able to give in our account at the last great day?

I reckon it to be my business, as a man sent of God, never for a moment to consider how you or anybody else will like what I have to say in my Master’s name, nor whether it shall be approved by this man or that, whether he is eminent in rank or eminent as a critic. Nay, let him be what or who he may, if I have done my Master’s work faithfully, it matters not to me whether the man praises it to the skies or condemns it to the bottomless pit.

In the pulpit, it does not concern me what man’s judgment upon my message shall be—and you in the pews must never hesitate to take the consequences of doing what is right. Be just in your business, come what may of it. Be honest in your profession, carry out your principles, and if that should involve loss, be content to lose. Whatever comes of it, be straight—as straight as though God had ruled you with His own divine hand, and there was ne’er a bend or crack in your character. Press onward towards the goal of sincerity and purity—and may God strengthen you to reach it!

Though there are a thousand influences that might make a true man fall, and cause a brave man to turn coward, and might urge you to sell your principles, or at least to take off the sharp angles of them,

do not so—do not so—by the love of God, do not so! As “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” do not leave your God, do not forsake his truth!

Your fathers died rather than give up the Gospel. Your ancestors fought for it on many a bloody field. We have cast away the sword of the warrior and we have done well, for we fight not with carnal weapons, but by the grace of God, we grasp “the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”—and with brave hearts and strong we stand steadfastly for the faith. And so will we stand until the truth shall win the day and the victory shall be unto the Captain of our salvation.

Stand fast, brethren, in the name of God, and may the Lord bless you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

HEBREWS 13:1-21

This is a practical chapter at the close of this most instructive epistle.

Verse 1. *Let brotherly love continue.*

The word, “continue,” implies that the “brotherly love” exists. There are many things which might put an end to it, so see to it that as far as you are concerned, it continues. Under all provocations and under all disappointments, “Let brotherly love continue.”

2-3. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.*

And being likely therefore to take your own turn of suffering and to need the sympathy of your fellow Christians. Show sympathy to others while they need it and they will gratefully remember you when you are in bonds or in adversity.

4. *Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

And terrible will be their doom when God does judge them. They may think that, because they sin in secret, they shall escape punishment—but it shall not be so. Whether men judge them or not, God will judge them.

5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

You have a grand reserve, therefore. What you have in possession is only a little spending money to use on the road to heaven, but “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” You may confidently fall back upon the providence of God in all times of straitness and need.

6-8. *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.* [See sermons #170, The Immutability of Christ; #848, Jesus Christ is Immutable and #2358, The Unchangeable Christ]

It is for your own benefit to remember in your prayers those who preach the Word of God to you, for what can they do without divine assistance and how can you be profited by them unless they are first blessed of God? Remember them, therefore.

9. *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.*

Do not put yourself into every man’s hand to let him play with you as he pleases. The fish that never nibbles at the bait is not likely to be caught by the hook—and he who will not give heed to “divers and strange doctrines” is not likely to be carried away in the net of heresy.

9. *For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

Some in the apostle’s day made religion to consist almost entirely in observing certain rules as to what they ate and what they drank. “Be not so foolish,” says Paul, “there is something better than that. Seek to have your heart established with grace.”

10. *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.*

Those who cling to the external and ceremonial observances of religion have no right to the privileges which belong to those who come to the spiritual altar—they cannot share that secret.

11-14. *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

Then, my brother or sister, do not look for a continuing city here. Do not build your nest on any one of the trees of earth, for they are all marked for the axe, and they will all have to come down, and your nest too, if you have built upon them.

15. *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.* [See sermon #2048, A Life-Long Occupation] If you are believers in Christ, you are God’s priests and this is the sacrifice that you are continually to offer—the fruit of your lips, giving thanks to God’s name.

16. *But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

We are to do good to others, to communicate of our own good things to those who need them, and to do this at some sacrifice to ourselves “for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

17-19. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

You must have noted how often the apostle asks for the prayers of those to whom he is writing, so we are following a good example when we ask you to pray for us.

20-21. *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* [See sermons #277, The Blood of The Everlasting Covenant; #1186, Blood of The Covenant and #1368, The God of Peace and Our Sanctification]

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